

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: EEC, ENRG
SUBJ: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, JUNE 26-27, 1978:
1985 ENERGY GOALS

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 12096 (B) BRUSSELS 10698

1. JUNE 26-27 EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL WAS UNABLE TO
REACH AGREEMENT ON THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION (REF A) CON-
CERNING 1985 ENERGY GOALS FOR THE COMMUNITY. DEADLOCK
RESULTED FROM UK REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ANY REFERENCE TO
REFINERY POLICY IN THE RESOLUTION PROVISION (PARA 2 -
REF A)RELATING TO A 1985 NET ENERGY IMPORT CEILING OF
500 MILLION TONS OF OIL EQUIVALENT (MTOE). THE BRITISH
UNEXPECTEDLY REVERSED THEIR PREVIOUS STANCE ON THIS POINT,
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AS THE LANGUAGE IN THE PROPOSAL TO THE COUNCIL DID IN FACT
SATISFY EARLIER BRITISH INSISTENCE THAT THE BALANCE BE-
TWEEN EC REFINERY CAPACITY AND DEMAND FOR PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS SHOULD MERELY BE KEPT "UNDER CLOSE REVIEW". THE
BRITISH ALSO REFUSED TO ACCEPT ALTERNATE LANGUAGE PROPOSED
BY THE DANISH PRESIDENCY, WHICH CALLED FOR THE COUNCIL TO
"RECOGNIZE" THAT THE 500 MTOE OBJECTIVE "HAS IMPLICATIONS"

FOR THE EC REFINERY SITUATION, AND TO ASK THE JULY 6-7 EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN BREMEN TO PROVIDE "ORIENTATIONS" IN THIS REGARD. ACCORDING TO COMMISSION AND PERMREP SOURCES, ALL OTHER MEMBER STATES WERE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE LANGUAGE IN THE PROPOSAL TO THE COUNCIL, WHILE THE UK INDICATED IT COULD ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION ONLY IF THE OFFENDING PHRASE RELATING TO REFINERY CAPACITY WERE REMOVED.

2. UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE COUNCIL DISCUSSION THAT HMG IS NOT PREPARED TO AGREE ON A REFERENCE TO REFINERY POLICY "IN ISOLATION." HE ASSERTED THAT THE UK HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY ENERGY POLICY, SINGLING OUT BRITISH AGREEMENT TO EURATOM LOANS, COKING COAL SUBSIDIES, AND EMERGENCY ENERGY SHARING MEASURES; BUT HE REMINDED REPORTERS THAT THE MAY 30 ENERGY COUNCIL (REF B) MADE NO PROGRESS ON STEAM COAL, WHICH HE TERMED A MAJOR ENERGY SOURCE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE UK. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE UK WOULD NOT ACCEPT DISCUSSION OF REFINERY POLICY WITHOUT OBTAINING CONCRETE COMMITMENTS FROM ITS EC PARTNERS ON STEAM COAL, BUT HE INSISTED, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE UK IS NOT FORMALLY LINKING THE TWO MATTERS, AND THAT UK OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT DISCUSSION OF REFINERY POLICY IS BASED ON THE MERITS OF THAT ISSUE ALONE. IN THIS VEIN, HE REPEATED THE BRITISH COMPLAINT THAT THE UK NOW FINDS ITSELF CONFRONTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH A "MAJOR DEMAND" TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT PAST OVER-INVESTMENT IN THE REFINERY SECTOR BY OTHER MEMBER STATES.

3. COREPER IS TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION JUNE 29. PERMREP OFFICIALS SAY THAT, IF COREPER IS ABLE TO AGREE ON A COMPROMISE, A REFERENCE TO THE 1985 ENERGY GOALS WOULD FORM PART OF THE DANISH PRESIDENCY'S OVERALL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRATEGY SUBMISSION TO THE BREMEN SUMMIT (SEE SEPTTEL). THESE OFFICIALS SAY THAT, IF COREPER IS UNABLE TO AGREE, A DECISION WILL THEN HAVE TO BE TAKEN AS TO WHETHER THE 1985 GOALS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE BREMEN SUMMIT FOR RESOLUTION. HINTON

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